

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Romano Prodi of Italy in Denver
June 20, 1997

Proposed Tobacco Agreement

Q. Mr. President, could we ask you one question, again—I'm sorry—on tobacco? Apparently, Mr. Kessler is already a little bit skeptical about the agreement, particularly as it concerns regulating nicotine levels. Could the White House be in a position of rejecting this agreement? What are your concerns over nicotine levels?

President Clinton. Well, of course we could. We could be in a position of rejecting it or accepting it; I haven't seen it yet.

I received a letter—I was told that I received a letter after I left to come out here, from Dr. Kessler and Dr. Koop, both of whom, as you know, have worked with me very closely on this issue—asking for a reasonable amount of time for them to evaluate this. And I think that they should evaluate it, and of course I care very deeply about what they say. I have worked with them on a whole range of issues. And we want to see what it says.

The test should be, does it deserve clear and unambiguous jurisdiction for the FDA in important areas, and is the money spent in an appropriate way so that we advance the protection of public health and reduce children smoking? That's it. It's a simple test for me and I—but I can't comment on it because I haven't seen it. And I think that it's the same for them. You would expect them to put up a few little red flags, but we all ought to—these folks have been working hard and they've done their best, and now we should look at it and make our judgments.

Let me say to the American press, while you're here, I want to thank Prime Minister Prodi and the members of his government for the extraordinary leadership that Italy has shown in the Balkans, working with us in Bosnia, being a very effective member of the contact group, providing support for American actions there, without which we would have been able to proceed, and then, most recently, for really an almost unprecedented effort to lead a multinational force in Albania. I will predict to you that in future years we

will look back on this Italian effort and see it as a real watershed in European leadership for promoting security and minimizing disruption. I just wanted to thank him and say that to you, sir.

Prime Minister Prodi. Thank you.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. Prodi, on Bosnia, do you believe that the multinational force should stay after 1998? Do you have any concerns that fighting will still break out?

Prime Minister Prodi. I have some concerns, but we shall talk about that in our conversation. And of course, the Bosnian situation is very complex and a problem to end it in a short time is not easy to solve. But we came here just to talk of this problem.

Q. Thank you.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

President Clinton. I would like to say that it's a great honor for us to have Prime Minister Prodi and the distinguished members of his government here. And I want to also say that the United States is deeply grateful for Italy's leadership in promoting peace in the Balkans, especially the work that we have done together in Bosnia. The United States could not have done its job in Bosnia without the support of Italy.

And I am especially grateful for the leadership that Italy has shown in Albania. It is an almost unprecedented effort to put together a European initiative to minimize the troubles of Albania, which are the kinds of things that we will be dealing with for a long time. And I believe that in years to come, we will look back on the Italian effort here as a dramatic historic breakthrough in the capacity of the European nations to promote peace and deal with difficulties.

NOTE: The exchange began at 4:25 p.m. at the Brown Palace Hotel. In his remarks, the President referred to former Commissioner of Food and Drugs David A. Kessler, and former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the European Union-United States Mutual Recognition Agreements*June 20, 1997*

I am pleased the United States and the European Union have initialed in Denver today landmark agreements that represent a new level of transatlantic cooperation. These accords will reduce trade barriers, increase U.S. exports, and promote more efficient regulation in sectors that account for approximately \$50 billion in two-way trade between the United States and Europe, including telecommunications equipment, information technology, medical devices, and pharmaceuticals.

The Mutual Recognition Agreements will eliminate the need for duplicative testing, inspection, or certification of products destined for trade on each side of the Atlantic, while protecting the health and safety of consumers on both sides of the Atlantic. By their very nature, these accords represent and require the highest level political, economic, and regulatory cooperation between nations. When implemented, this package will serve to increase U.S. exports by saving manufacturers up to 10 percent of the cost of delivering U.S. exports to Europe and enhance transatlantic cooperation to protect the health and safety of our peoples. This is a good agreement for the American people and is good news for manufacturers, workers, and consumers in the United States and Europe.

I want to thank the TransAtlantic Business Dialogue for its important role in supporting these negotiations. I also want to congratulate Commerce Secretary William Daley, U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky, Under Secretary of State Stuart Eizenstat, and all the U.S. agencies that showed creativity and persistence in forging agreements that will help shape the transatlantic marketplace.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Joint Statement by France, Russia, and the United States on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*June 20, 1997*

On the occasion of our meeting in Denver, we, the Presidents of France, the Russian Federation and the United States of America, as leaders of the countries that co-chair the OSCE Minsk Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh, express our deep concern over the continuing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It has seriously undermined economic and social development and prosperity throughout the Caucasus region. It has created thousands of victims. Over a million people are still displaced from their homes.

We are encouraged by the continued observance of the cease-fire. However, the cease-fire by itself is insufficient. Without progress toward a durable settlement, the cease-fire could break down. The international community thus has repeatedly called for a settlement; we believe there should be no delay in establishing a stable and lasting peace in the region.

To that end we have committed our countries to work closely together to assist the efforts of the parties to negotiate a resolution to the conflict. The French, Russian, and U.S. Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Conference have presented a new proposal for a comprehensive settlement, taking into consideration the legitimate interests and concerns of all parties. It represents an appropriate basis for achieving a mutual agreement. The primary responsibility, however, rests with the parties and their leaders. We call upon them to take a positive approach, to build upon this proposal and to negotiate an early settlement.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.